

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling a DHCP relay in a ~~broadcast~~ broadband access device to implement the broadband access device for controlling and management of managing all interactions between a DHCP client and a DHCP server, comprising:

modifying, at the ~~broadcast~~ broadband access device, one or more protocol data fields in at least one DHCP message ~~communicated~~ communication between a DHCP relay, the DHCP client and the DHCP server during an initiation phase of the DHCP interaction at an Application Layer of TCP/IP protocol, so that ~~the at least one~~ all DHCP messages communicated between the DHCP client and the DHCP server ~~can~~ pass through the DHCP relay located in the Application Layer,

wherein modifying the one or more protocol fields includes:

upon receiving a DHCP message for request sent from the DHCP client to the DHCP server, filling in at least one field associated with the DHCP relay in the DHCP message for request such that all the DHCP messages for response returned from the DHCP server to the DHCP client for responding to the DHCP message for request pass through the DHCP relay, and

upon receiving a DHCP message for response sent from the DHCP server to the DHCP client, replacing at least one server parameter of a field associated with the DHCP server in the DHCP message for response with at least one relay parameter of the DHCP relay.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein filling in the at least one field associated with the DHCP relay in the DHCP message for request is performed such that a DHCP message for response returned from the DHCP server to the DHCP client for responding to the DHCP message for request can pass through the DHCP relay~~, and wherein modifying the one or more protocol fields further includes:

extracting and storing, at the DHCP relay, the at least one server parameter of the field associated with the DHCP server in an initial DHCP message for response prior to replacing the at least one server parameter with the at least one relay parameter of the DHCP relay;

sending the initial DHCP message for response to the DHCP client;

processing, at the DHCP relay, a subsequently received DHCP message for response returned from the DHCP server to the DHCP client;

determining whether the subsequently received DHCP message for response contains the field associated with the DHCP ~~server~~ server,

in response to determining that the subsequently received DHCP message for response does not contain the field associated with the DHCP server, sending the subsequently received DHCP message for response to the DHCP client directly,

otherwise, replacing the at least one DHCP server parameter in the field associated with the DHCP server with the at least one DHCP relay parameter, and then sending the subsequently received DHCP message for response to the DHCP client so that a subsequent DHCP message for request sent from the DHCP client to the DHCP server can pass through the DHCP relay;

receiving, at the DHCP relay, the subsequent DHCP message for request,

determining whether the subsequent DHCP message for request includes the field associated with the DHCP ~~server~~ server,

in response to determining that the subsequent DHCP message for request does not include the field associated with the DHCP server, sending the subsequent DHCP message for request to the DHCP server directly,

otherwise, filling in the field associated with the DHCP server with the extracted and stored at least one server parameter, and sending the subsequent DHCP message for request to the DHCP server so that one or more other subsequent DHCP messages for request can pass validity checking by the DHCP server.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

controlling and managing, at the DHCP relay, the interaction between the DHCP client and the DHCP server by varying network parameters of the DHCP client and detecting whether the DHCP client is online according to requirements of a user management strategy.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein for a DHCPDISCOVER or DHCPREQUEST message sent from the DHCP client to the DHCP server, the DHCP relay fills in the at least one field associated with the DHCP relay with a value so that a DHCPOFFER,

DHCPACK or DHCPNAK response from the DHCP server to the DHCP client can be sent to the DHCP relay.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4, wherein upon receiving a DHCPOFFER, DHCPACK or DHCPNAK response, the DHCP relay extracts and stores the at least one server parameter in the DHCPOFFER, DHCPACK or DHCPNAK response, and replaces the at least one server parameter with the at least one relay parameter so that a unicast request to the DHCP server can be still sent to the DHCP relay after the DHCP client has configured an IP address.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the DHCP relay receives the subsequent DHCP message for response, and if the field associated with the DHCP server is contained in the subsequent DHCP message for response, the DHCP relay replaces a value of the fields associated with the DHCP server with its IP address.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the subsequently received DHCP message for response is a DHCPACK message in a Dynamical Host Configuration Protocol.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the subsequent DHCP message for request is a DHCPREQUEST message, a DHCPINFORM message or a DHCPRELEASE message in a Dynamical Host Configuration Protocol.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a DHCP relay configured to:

modify one or more protocol fields in at least one DHCP message communicated between the DHCP relay, a DHCP client and a DHCP server during an initiation phase of a DHCP interaction at an Application Layer of TCP/IP protocol, so that ~~the at least one~~ all DHCP messages communicated between the DHCP client and the DHCP server can pass through the DHCP relay located in the Application Layer, wherein modifying the one or more protocol fields includes:

upon receiving a DHCP message for request sent from the DHCP client to the DHCP server, filling in at least one field associated with the DHCP relay in the DHCP message for request such that all the DHCP messages for response returned from the DHCP server to the DHCP client for responding to the DHCP message for request pass through the DHCP relay, and

upon receiving a DHCP message for response sent from the DHCP server to the DHCP client, replacing at least one server parameter of a field associated with the DHCP server in the DHCP message for response with at least one relay parameter of the DHCP relay.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 9, ~~wherein filling in the fields associated with the DHCP relay in the DHCP message for request is performed such that a DHCP message for response returned from the DHCP server to the DHCP client for responding to the DHCP message for request can pass through the DHCP relay~~, and wherein modifying the one or more protocol fields further includes:

extracting and storing, at the DHCP relay, the at least one server parameter of the field associated with the DHCP server in an initial DHCP message for response prior to replacing the at least one server parameter with the at least one relay parameter of the DHCP relay; and

sending the initial DHCP message for response to the DHCP client.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein modifying the one or more protocol fields further includes:

processing, at the DHCP relay, a subsequently received DHCP message for response returned from the DHCP server to the DHCP client;

determining whether the subsequently received DHCP message for response contains the field associated with the DHCP ~~server~~ server; and

in response to determining that the subsequently received DHCP message for response does not contain the field associated with the DHCP server, sending the subsequently received DHCP message for response to the DHCP client directly,

otherwise, replacing the at least one DHCP server parameter in the field associated with the DHCP server with the at least one DHCP relay parameter, and then sending the subsequently

received DHCP message for response to the DHCP client so that a subsequent DHCP message for request sent from the DHCP client to the DHCP server can pass through the DHCP relay.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein modifying the one or more protocol fields further includes:

receiving, at the DHCP relay, the subsequent DHCP message for request;

determining whether the subsequent DHCP message for request includes the field associated with the DHCP ~~server~~ server; and

in response to determining that the subsequent DHCP message for request does not include the field associated with the DHCP server, sending the subsequent DHCP message for request to the DHCP server directly,

otherwise, filling in the field associated with the DHCP server with the extracted and stored at least one server parameter, and sending the subsequent DHCP message for request to the DHCP server so that one or more other subsequent DHCP messages for request can pass validity checking by the DHCP server.

13. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim ~~2~~ 10, wherein upon receiving a DHCPDISCOVER or DHCPREQUEST message sent from the DHCP client to the DHCP server, the DHCP relay is configured to fill in the at least one field associated with the DHCP relay with a value so that a DHCPOFFER, DHCPACK or DHCPNAK response from the DHCP server to the DHCP client can be sent to the DHCP relay.

Claims 14 through 16. (Canceled).